

Editorial: Linking Language & Ideas

In recent years, many researchers have come to the realization that all learning is social and that concepts are meaningful only when linked to other concepts and ideas. Mohan has argued that knowledge itself is structured and that learners are able to make rapid strides if they can recognize basic ways knowledge is organized. But the manner in which knowledge is exchanged depends on genres, which are conventionally structured ways of organizing text. A text beginning with "Once upon a time." produces much different expectations regarding organization, content, and level of language than one beginning with "The purpose of this study.." The genre conventions through which knowledge is created help readers generate rapid and accurate expectations, access the new information, and allow for efficient communication of findings. Several researchers have argued convincingly that increased awareness of genre can help learners understand the subject matter itself. This is one reason it is often difficult if not impossible to divorce language from content.

The articles in this issue focus on ways of helping learners recognize the links between language and content through content-based instruction. Drawing on research in psychology and education, Stoller demonstrates that thematically organized materials are easier to remember and learn and are more motivating for students. She provides a detailed example of the integration of language and content in a project to help students understand U.S. elections. Brinton and Holten provide a lesson framework for content-based instruction, describing sequenced activities on the topic of outer space. Mohan and van Naerssen focus on one very important knowledge structure-cause and effect-to help heighten students' awareness of how cause and effect is conveyed in texts. Master provides the justification for using models in EST classes with examples from extended definitions and a description of a mechanism. Our *Teacher Resource* page focuses on books related to content-based instruction, which will also be the theme of the Winter issue.

The theme of outer space from Brinton and Holten's article is picked up in our *Lighter Side* page as well as the insert. At the time of this writing, the Sojourner is making forays into uncharted territories of Mars, which promises to generate an explosion of knowledge about the nearest planet. Our idiom page tests readers' knowledge of the universe, and our insert highlights key moments in space exploration and shows how spinoffs from the space program have resulted in commercial products now considered essential to modern life.

In our new *English@* page, Chip Harman focuses on e-mail and web-based resources which contain a wealth of information on the topics related to our lead articles. Our *Civic Education* page supplements the July issue pages with an information gap activity using maps from the eastern half of the United States. It is hoped that teachers can easily use these pages in their classroom as models for integrating language and content.

This is my last issue as editor as I pass the baton to the new editor, Damon Anderson. Damon is well known to many of our readers as he has conducted programs and consultations for USIA in more than 65 countries. This experience will prove invaluable for our readers as the *Forum* continues to bridge cultures and continents and helps make the world a smaller place.